

Waste Reduction Ideas for Offices— Paper, Paper Everywhere

Reduce

- Eliminate unnecessary forms and redesign to use less paper.
- Don't use cover sheets on faxes.
- Make fewer copies. Share copies and don't make more copies than you need.
- Print or copy on both sides.
- Proof documents on screen and preview before printing.
- Set up computers to automatically print two-sided.
- Use lightweight paper.
- Remove duplicate names and out-of-date entries from mailing lists.
- Take steps to reduce unsolicited mail.
- Design mailers that avoid the use of envelopes (fold and staple the paper).
- Use electronic mail and voice mail.
- Post announcements on bulletin boards or circulate copies.
- Circulate memos, documents, reports, and publications.
- Allow internal documents to be circulated with legible minor hand corrections rather than retyping drafts.

Reuse

- Collect paper that has been used on one side and reuse as draft paper in fax machines and for scratch pads and copies (in copiers with multiple trays, one tray can be stocked with draft paper).
- Buy only copiers and printers that will make two-sided copies reliably.

- Reuse envelopes by placing a label over the old address.
- Use reusable envelopes for inter-office mail.
- Use outdated letterhead for in-house memos.
- Reuse file folders.
- Shred newspapers and reuse for packaging.
- Investigate whether local libraries, schools, hospitals, nursing homes, etc. could use your old trade journals or magazines.

Recycle

- Estimate how much waste paper your office produces and arrange to have it picked up by your waste hauler or a recycler.
- If your office is small, consider combining your recyclables with other small offices nearby.
- Provide desktop recycling containers for employees.
- Provide clearly labeled recycling bins near copiers, shipping and receiving areas, and in employee eating areas to collect white paper, mixed paper, newspaper, magazines, cardboard, and non paper products (glass, aluminum, plastic, etc).
- Don't buy paper that is a contaminant in recycling. These include thermal fax paper and paper with glossy/plastic coatings or plastic windows. Bright-colored paper including goldenrod, paper printed with laser inks, or paper containing adhesive products is not desirable.
- Print directly on envelopes rather than using labels.

- For more information on implementing paper reduction, see the CIWMB Publication #500-94-034, “Creating a Paper Reduction Campaign.”

Make Your Purchases Count

- Buy and use paper with at least 25 percent postconsumer recycled content.
- Purchase products with no packaging, less packaging, or reusable packaging.
- Look for products in concentrate or bulk form.
- Request that deliveries be shipped in returnable containers and return cardboard boxes to the distributor.
- Ask vendors to take back packaging. In some cases they may be able to reuse it.
- Prior to recycling or disposing, check to see if anyone can reuse packaging materials. Cardboard and polystyrene may be used for art projects. Some mail companies are willing to reuse packaging (Check with Mail Boxes, Etc.).
- Repack in the same cartons that transported materials to the facility.
- Set up an area for employees to exchange used items.
- Advertise surplus and reusable waste items through the California Materials Exchange Program (CalMAX) or a local materials exchange. Call (916) 341-6611 or e-mail calmax@ciwmb.ca.gov for more information.
- Rent equipment that you only use occasionally.
- Use remanufactured office equipment.
- Invest in equipment that is high quality, durable, and repairable.
- Buy fluorescent rather than incandescent bulbs.
- Sell or give old furniture and equipment to employees or donate it to a local charity. See the CIWMB Publication #500-94-030, “Waste Reduction Through Business Purchasing.”

Food, Glorious Food

- Encourage employees to keep reusable cups, plates, and silverware at their desks.
- Encourage employees to bring lunch to work in reusable containers.
- Work with cafeteria and food vendors to reduce food and packaging waste by providing condiments in bulk dispensers, giving customers a discount when they use their own cups, etc.
- If possible, arrange to compost food scraps (no meat, grease, or dairy products).
- Make worm bins available for inside composting. Properly managed, they are odor-free and convenient. See the worms Web site, www.ciwmb.ca.gov/Organics/Worms/.

Landscaping

- Plant landscaping that requires low maintenance and generates less waste (grows slowly, doesn’t need to be trimmed, and uses less water).
- Encourage your building’s landscaper to grasscycle, compost, and mulch to reduce green waste.
- See CIWMB Publication #500-94-043, “Waste Reduction Opportunities in the Landscape Industry.”

Building Maintenance and Custodial

- See CIWMB Publication #500-94-032, “Reducing Waste in Property Management.”

Transportation

- Encourage employees to take public transportation by offering discounted tickets or passes. Provide reserved parking spaces for carpoolers.
- Use public transportation for office business.
- Encourage biking and walking by providing bike racks and showers.

Reduce Toxics

- Use vegetable-based inks when printing.
- Use nontoxic cleaners and washable rags for cleaning.

Tell Them About It

- Tell your clients about your waste reduction efforts.
- Print or type “recycled content” on products with recycled content.
- Keep staff and management informed about the results of their efforts to reduce waste.
- Post informational signs near recycling and composting bins to let people know what you are doing and why.

For More Help

- “Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, It’s Good Business, A Guide for California Businesses,” 1994, CIWMB Publication #500-94-004.
- For information on how to prevent waste, call the Waste Prevention Information Exchange, (916) 341-6363.
- Visit Waste Prevention World, www.ciwmb.ca.gov/WPW/.

CIWMB publications are available online at www.ciwmb.ca.gov/Publications/ or by calling (916) 341-6306. If you have questions, information, ideas, educational materials, etc., please e-mail us at bzassist@ciwmb.ca.gov or call (916) 341-6363.

The energy challenge facing California is real. Every Californian needs to take immediate action to reduce energy consumption. For a list of simple ways you can reduce demand and cut energy costs, **Flex Your Power** and visit www.consumerenergycenter.org/flex/index.html.